



Binghamton Youth Symphony Orchestra

Handbook

By: BYSO Staff Adapted from CYSO
Reviewed/Revised By: B.G.Peters/R.J. Colton
Approved By: BYSO Board of Directors

Revised: 23 September, 2003

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
INTRODUCTION	3
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	4
STUDENT OFFICERS	4
ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION	5
OFFICIAL MAILING ADDRESS	5
OFFICIAL WEB SITE ADDRESS	5
BYSO PERSONNEL LISTING:	5
VOLUNTEERS FOR BYSO	6
BYSO MEMBERSHIP	7
ASSURANCE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY	7
STUDENT MEMBERSHIP	7
TIPS FOR ORCHESTRA MEMBERS	9
STUDENT MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES	11
Conduct	11
Attendance	11
Punctuality	12
Music	12
Preparation	12
Announcements	12
Equipment	13
REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE FACILITIES	13
SCHOOL PARTICIPATION	13
WEB SITE USAGE/SECURITY	14
CONCERTS/DRESS CODE FOR CONCERTS	15
GUIDELINES / GENERAL REHEARSAL PROCEDURE	15
TUNING	16
STRINGS	16
CONCERT PROCEDURE	16
MUSIC POLICY	17
BYSO AUDITIONS	17
BYSO SEATING AUDITIONS	18
MUSIC TEACHERS	20
DIRECTIONS TO REHEARSAL AND CONCERT SITES	20
REHEARSALS	20
CONCERT SITES	20
SNOW POLICY	21

INTRODUCTION

The Binghamton Youth Symphony Orchestra was established in 1961 to promote the musical education of young people in elementary, junior and senior high school in the Southern Tier of New York and Northern Pennsylvania.

It was incorporated as The Binghamton Youth Symphony, Inc. in 1984 as a not-for-profit Corporation.

The purposes of the organization are:

1. To promote the musical activities of the Binghamton Youth Symphony and the Junior Orchestra.
2. To promote and enrich the musical education of young people in this region.
3. To offer performance opportunities to talented musicians in elementary, junior and senior high school.

THE BINGHAMTON YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, INC.
P.O. Box 1235
Binghamton, New York, 13902-1235

Barry G. Peters, Music Director, Conductor, Symphony Orchestra
Russell J. Colton, Conductor, Junior Orchestra
Bernard J. Shifrin, Conductor Emeritus

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Petcosky (President)
Greta Myers (Vice President)
Diane Eck (Treasurer)

Jacqueline Tedesco Life Member
Eugene Tedesco Life Member
Madeleine Iannone Life Member
Eugene Iannone Life Member

Barbara Byrne
Matthew Byrne
Andrew Chadwick
Cindy Chadwick
Susan Hoffman (Auditions Coordinator)
Jason Eck (Student President)
Linda McKeon
Shanna Fairbanks Messing (Concert Committee)
Greta Myers
Patricia Rantanen
William Siebert (WebMaster)
Joey Singleton
Mark Stanley (Media Relations)

STUDENT OFFICERS

Jason Eck (President)
Clair Byrne (Vice President)
Tanzy Woan (Secretary)
Angela Poole (Secretary)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

OFFICIAL MAILING ADDRESS

Letters and correspondence should be addressed to:

Name of Individual or Committee

c/o BYSO

P.O. Box 1235

Binghamton, New York, 13902-1235

OFFICIAL WEB SITE ADDRESS

Current Information regarding the orchestra may be received via the BYSO

Web Site www.binghamtonyouthsymphony.org

Messages for the Conductors, Directors, or personnel listed below, as well as general informational messages and requests may also be made through our e-mail address on the web site.

BYSO PERSONNEL LISTING:

Barry G. Peters, BYSO Music Director and Conductor of Symphony

Russell J. Colton, Conductor of Junior Orchestra

Tom Petcosky, President, Board of Directors

Greta Myers, Vice President, Board of Directors

Diane Eck, Treasurer, Board of Directors

Susan Hoffman, Audition Coordinator

William Siebert, Web Site Designer / Administrator, Media Relations

Linda McKeon, Joey Singleton, Social Committee Joint Chair

Tom Petcosky, Greta Myers, Ticket Committee Joint Chair, Fund Raising

Mark Stanley, Ticket Committee Joint Chair, Media Relations

Jason Eck, Student President

Matthew Byrne, Barbara Byrne, Registration

VOLUNTEERS FOR BYSO

The BYSO is administered through the Board of Directors and assisted by a number of active volunteers. Parents and friends of student members are urged to volunteer in order to enable the organization to serve our talented young musicians.

Volunteers are needed for the many areas in which the orchestra functions. The Board of Directors is a working Board and divided into committees.

Volunteers would be welcome in the following committees:

- Fund Raising
- Concert Committee
- Publicity
- Social Committee

The Fund Raising Committee - needs volunteers to assist with preparation and mailing of fund raising related materials.

The Concert Committee - needs volunteers to assist with concerts, rehearsals, stage management, and all pre-concert preparations.

The Publicity Committee - needs persons to design and run posters, hang posters, write press releases, etc.

Social Committee – needs volunteers to assist in the planning and preparation of the Annual Holiday Reunion, Annual Picnic and any other social events approved by the Board of Directors.

The BYSO accepts many in-kind services. If you or your company can provide a service to the orchestra, this would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to volunteer, please let us know by mailing your form to BYSO, P. O. Box 1235 Binghamton, NY, 13902, or returning it to BYSO with your student artist prior to Rehearsals on either Saturday or Sunday.

If you have any questions, please go to the website and use the feedback form.

BYSO MEMBERSHIP

ASSURANCE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of the Binghamton Youth Symphony Orchestra, Inc., to admit members on the basis of their qualification only, and with assurance of equal opportunity and treatment regardless of race, color, creed, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, or handicap.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

1. Any instrumentalist who is interested in membership in the BYSO may be considered a candidate provided that:

- a. A student is in middle, junior or senior high school, or age 11 through 18. A Junior Orchestra student must be age 8 or above.
- b. A written application is made to the Audition Coordinator using the Audition application form.
- c. The applicant qualifies, on the basis of an audition, to the satisfaction of the Conductor and/or audition panel;

Note: Strings must play with acceptable intonation, clear tone, use of the whole bow and small bows, dynamic range, and vibrato. Applicants must play the excerpts and meet the other requirements specified in the Audition Application.

- d. A vacancy exists in the orchestra.

2. A candidate shall become a member of the orchestra when the membership fee is paid. The **non-refundable annual fee of \$50.00 for Junior Symphony and \$75.00 for Senior Symphony**, is due prior to attending the first rehearsal of the year. In cases of hardship, accepted candidates may make application to the Treasurer of the Board of Directors for an exemption.

3. An accepted candidate becomes and remains a member of the orchestra as long as he/she has paid the membership fee when due, and continues to observe the conditions stated under Student Responsibilities.
4. The conductors, on the basis of the program auditions, juries, and section balance will determine chair assignments in the Symphony and Junior orchestras.

Every Seat in the Orchestra is of EQUAL IMPORTANCE!

Challenges are **not** a part of the seating process.

TIPS FOR ORCHESTRA MEMBERS

BREATHE
LISTEN
CUE
WATCH
SING
SUSTAIN
SUBDIVIDE
FEEL

BREATHE	Especially important for strings. Inhale before each phrase, allowing the music to flow from you with your breath.
CUE	As in chamber music, give a small physical cue -- to yourself and others in your section - before each entrance, accent, tempo change, syncopation, or cutoff. This improves ensemble playing dramatically, when all musicians (not just section leaders) participate.
SING	In your imagination; sing the music to hear exactly how it must sound, before playing it. Make your instrument duplicate what you hear in your head. While practicing at home, try singing a phrase aloud to develop a conception; then play it.
SUBDIVIDE	Feel the subdivisions of every beat inside you, especially during rests, long notes, and dotted notes. Never let the pulse subside. Take personal responsibility for maintaining the pulse of the section.
LISTEN	Always know what is going on around you. Blend with the section's sound. If you are not playing the melody, listen to it and accompany it accurately and sensitively. If you are playing the melody, listen to the accompaniment. Be aware of changes in harmony. Listen to your intonation; tune to those around you. Balance with the ensemble.

WATCH	Be free from the printed page. Keep a watchful eye on the conductor and on your section leader. Be aware of the concertmaster. What part of the bow is being used? What part of the string? How much bow? How much vibrato? Make it your responsibility to determine these things by watching.
SUSTAIN	In most music (unless the piece dictates otherwise), once you commit yourself to a dynamic, it is your responsibility to sustain the intensity and beauty of the sound until its conclusion. (This is one of the most difficult skills for a young orchestra to master - and precisely this skill is what distinguishes some of the greatest orchestras of the world.) Do not expect the section to carry your intensity -you carry the section's intensity!
FEEL	Perhaps the most important of all: With help from the conductor and from your own musical and life experience, try to feel the depth and passion of the music with your entire being. Make your instrument express this passion. Give life and humanity to the phrases you play. Sing, through your instrument, the beauty of your soul.

STUDENT MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Conduct

In the spirit of good music making, it is expected that BYSO participants will act responsibly at all times. Rules governing persons on public school property will be in effect at all times for BYSO events, whether or not they are held on school property. Should a problem arise, the conductor, music director will try to resolve the conflict. In the event that a conflict cannot be properly resolved for the good of the orchestra and the person(s) involved, the Music Director may recommend dismissal to the Board.

Student contracts are signed and in effect for the full year of the orchestra, including tours, concerts, etc.

Attendance

Attendance is **mandatory** for all rehearsals, and attendance records will be kept. In cases of unavoidable absence such as illness or other emergencies, please notify the Student Officers and/or the Conductor in advance if possible.

The BYSO mandates all musicians to participate in school orchestral or band music programs or in cases of home schooling Private Tutor lessons. In cases where there is a schedule conflict between a school music commitment and the BYSO, the school commitment takes precedence. This policy pertains only to school musical activities and **does not include sports, extracurricular activities or non-school organizations**. Where an absence is required because of a school or family conflict, the BYSO requires written or verbal notification to the conductor from the musician as soon as possible (preferably at the beginning of the year or semester).

(Constitution of BYSO) Article III Section IX,X and XI

BYSO experience has demonstrated that more than **5** absences from rehearsal within a semester, whatever the reason, are likely to have a negative impact on both the musician and his or her ensemble.

(Constitution of BYSO) Article III Section VIII

Consequently, your conductor will review attendance with any orchestra member whose attendance falls below this standard. Decisions will be

made on a case by case basis. Actions and remedies may include special juries, directed rehearsals, or in extreme cases dismissal from the BYSO.

Any absence from the two rehearsals preceding a performance and/ or the performance has grave impact on the orchestra as a whole. Absences for any reason other than a scheduled school musical commitment; illness or emergency is unacceptable.

Punctuality

To respect the performance of the orchestra as a whole and to make maximum use of available rehearsal time, students must be seated and prepared to tune 10 minutes prior to the scheduled rehearsal starting time. At the scheduled starting time, the conductor will begin. Tardiness must be explained to the appropriate personnel manager and to the general manager. Unexcused tardiness is subject to discipline at the conductor's discretion.

Music

Orchestra members are responsible for all music issued to them. Music must be returned in good condition at the end of the season. Music may be marked in soft pencil only. Members will be charged for replacement of lost or defaced parts. Members will also be charged for additional music folders that they order.

Please refer to the page on Music Policy of the Orchestra in the handbook.

Preparation

Orchestra members are expected to MASTER the music PRIOR to rehearsals. The music director will be available before and after rehearsals, or by appointment, if an orchestra member needs help. Members are encouraged and expected to seek help from their private teachers whenever needed. Musical competence must be maintained as determined by the Conductor. Chair assignments may be changed at the discretion of the Conductor. There are no challenges.

Announcements

Weekly announcements will be made by the conductors and on occasion a Board Member(s) may make verbal announcement at the beginning or rehearsal or immediately after the break. These announcements are

considered to be emergency notification, and orchestra members are responsible for information contained in these announcements as well, whether or not the student actually attended the rehearsal.

Announcements will also appear in the BYSO News Page, posted on our web site,

http://www.binghamtonyouthsymphony.org/BYSO_News.htm.

Members of the orchestra are responsible for all information appearing in the News Page.

Equipment

Participants are responsible for their own equipment and instruments, excepting percussionists, who are responsible for their sticks and mallets and equipment set-up. Parents are encouraged to have insurance for valuable instruments, as the BYSO cannot assume responsibility for damage or loss.

Rehearsal and Performance Facilities

Binghamton High School has graciously donated the use of their building to the BYSO. This is a very large in-kind donation! It is, therefore, imperative that we treat the building and all of its facilities with the utmost respect. Similarly, space rented for performances must also be respected.

School Participation

The **(Constitution of BYSO) Article III Section III** reads Members must play in their own school instrumental music program in order to participate in any of our Orchestras. Part of our purpose is to enhance and supplement school music instrumental programs, and it would be counter productive for us to do otherwise. Without the continued support of the fine music educators in the schools, we would quickly but surely cease to exist, and we insist, therefore, upon enforcing the “school participation” rule. Home school members should attempt to join their local school program if possible and/or be enrolled in private study.

Web Site Usage/Security

The Binghamton Youth Symphony has a web site that consists of a general-purpose (public) usage side and a private (members only) side. The public web contains information and details regarding the symphony and activities.

The Private web is designed for the members only and is password protected. The password will be supplied to you when you become a member. The Password is NOT be given out to anyone who is not a member of the group. The information that is contained in this section is protected for the safety of all orchestra members. In the event the password is given to anyone outside the group you are to notify the conductor, WebMaster or use the FeedBack form on the site immediately. This will allow us to get the password changed as quickly as is possible. YOUR SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF ALL ORCHESTRA MEMBERS DEPENDS ON IT.

You are encouraged to comment on our site and to suggest changes; improvements and/or new ideas that would help promote the orchestra and our activities in the community, both Public and Private (Members).

ORCHESTRAL ETIQUETTE AND PERFORMANCE

Concerts/Dress Code for Concerts

Senior Orchestra members are expected to participate in ALL scheduled concerts and be present at the designated time. Members must adhere to concert dress.

For **MEN**, black trousers, long sleeved white shirt, black jacket, black shoes and socks, and black bow tie is required.

For **LADIES**, concert dress shall be a conservatively cut black top with either a long (ankle length or longer) skirt or wide-legged trousers, dressy in both fabric and style. Black shoes and black hose are required for ladies.

A professional appearance is an important part of any performance.

Junior Orchestra members should dress as prescribed by their director.

GUIDELINES / GENERAL REHEARSAL PROCEDURE

1. Be at rehearsal, warmed up and in your seat at least ten (10) minutes before the "A" is sounded for tuning. It is expected that you will take bad weather, traffic, etc. into account in planning travel time. Always leave enough to be VERY EARLY for rehearsal. Drive safely!
2. ALWAYS have a #2 or softer, black pencil with an eraser on your stand for every rehearsal. If you make extra marks in your music or write in pen, you will be charged for the part. It is suggested that you make a copy of your music when it is assigned and make notations on the copy rather than the original.
3. There will be one (20) minute break at each rehearsal.

TUNING

At the beginning of each rehearsal and each concert, the concertmaster will stand, at which time players should stop warming up and maintain silence. The concertmaster will call for an "A" from the oboe. After careful listening to the pitch, the woodwinds will tune, followed by the brass, the lower strings, and the violins. You should always tune so quietly that you can always hear the oboe. A separate "A" will be given between each group. There should be NO playing once your group has tuned. NOTE: String Orchestra will tune with the concertmaster.

STRINGS

1. Section players must always be conscious of the principal players and concertmaster to match bowing, articulation, and placement of the bow on the string.

EXAMPLE: If the concertmaster plays a "piano" passage at the tip, all section players should match this. If the concertmaster is playing a passage "off the string" (spiccato), everyone should match this.

2. The inside player is responsible for turning pages.
3. Inside players should write their fingerings below the notes; outside players should write their fingerings above the notes.
4. Inside players are responsible for writing in the part bowing changes, dynamics, etc., which the conductor makes during rehearsals.
5. All questions that arise during rehearsal should be relayed to the principal player. If he/she cannot answer the question, the principal will relay the question to the conductor. This makes rehearsals more efficient.

CONCERT PROCEDURE

ALL musicians stand when the concertmaster stands, remain standing until he/she sits back down. If you are asked to take a solo bow after a concert performance, you should stand without hesitation and remain standing until the entire orchestra has stood and sits down.

MUSIC POLICY

1. NO BOWINGS ARE TO BE CHANGED WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE CONDUCTOR. If bowing need to be changed, they can be put in above other bowing.
2. If fingerings and bowings need to be included, write in soft pencil and erase before returning.
3. ALL music MUST BE RETURNED the night of the concert or at the end of the season or as you are instructed by your conductor.
 - Boxes will be backstage and a BYSO Board Member will be present backstage for questions to be answered.
 - If you do NOT return the music on the night of the concert, you are responsible for calling Mr. Peters or Mr. Colton and mailing the music to his home. NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule.
4. IF THE MUSIC IS MUTILATED IN ANY WAY, ORCHESTRA MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING THE COST OF THE PART.
5. MUSIC IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!!

BYSO AUDITIONS

All auditions require you register and setup an appointment and are scheduled through the Audition Coordinator. Requirements and applications and forms for returning members will be available in the spring. Auditions are held THREE times a year, in June, September and again in January. Mid-Year auditions are held on an as-needed basis. **Returning orchestra members do NOT have to audition annually to remain members of BYSO**, however you will have to audition for chair position at the beginning of the season. The Music Director, conductors, and/or another adjudicator listen to each audition. Orchestra members and their parents are encouraged to help the BYSO recruit new members. The audition requirements and any other additional information or changes will be made available to you in advance upon registration and the same information will also be available on our web site.

BYSO SEATING AUDITIONS

In an effort to seat the orchestra in a manner that benefits the entire organization, we have seating auditions twice a year. Even though we attempt to make the audition as fair as possible, there are always people who are disappointed or angry because they did not get the seat they expected to get. Please read and share the following guidelines with your parents and teachers.

The seating is based only on what two judges hear during a five-minute audition. The placement in the orchestra is by no means a true measure of your playing ability. In order for us to do that, we would have to hear you for a more extended time and even that might not give us a true picture. It is merely a “snapshot” of your abilities. Because you sit ahead or behind someone does not necessarily mean that you are better or worse than the other person. It simply means on the day of the audition, the results came out the way they did. When getting the results of the audition, keep the following things in mind:

1. You have no idea what the other people have done during the audition compared to you. You may have played well, but others may have even played beyond what you think they are capable of doing on that particular day. By the same token, we sometimes have an elevated opinion of how we play in an audition and it may not have been as good as you think it was. In contrast, you may have a lower opinion of how you performed, but it may have been better than you think.
2. Music is different from many other disciplines in that personal taste come into play when doing an audition. Your idea of great tone quality or musicality may differ from that of the judge. This is a variable that haunts all musicians in auditions. All you can do is perform the best you can and hope that the judge appreciates what you done.
3. People have good days and bad days. There are days we can't seem to do anything right and it might be the day of your audition. There are other days when you play beyond your usual capabilities. This invariably happens to different people during the audition and will have a bearing on the outcome.

4. People handle nerves in different ways. Some do it better than others. They are the people who channel that nervous energy in a positive direction. Unfortunately, the adjudicators cannot give you credit for something you did not do, it will be reflected in your seating results. The more auditions you experience, the better you will be at controlling those nerves.
5. You are being judged only on what the judges hear in that five-minute audition. They have no idea of your past experiences with the orchestra, the amount of time you practice, the literature you have covered, the type of instrument you play, etc. What counts in those five minutes is what you produce in that short time. You may indeed be a better musician than others. You need to prove it during the audition.
6. Some people will prioritize their activities. Someone in your section may see this audition as his/her main priority and decide to work on the orchestra music than solos, etudes, etc. Should you decide to make something other than the orchestra music your priority, it is your option. However, it may have a bearing on the results. In short you may simply have worked less on the audition material than someone else.
7. Membership in your county ensembles, all-state, your age, your position in your school ensemble, the school you come from, who your teacher might be, etc. are impossible to factor into seating fairly. Those factors will NOT be used as criteria for seating.

Please understand that we are trying to be as fair as we can to all of the orchestra members by giving them the same opportunities during the audition. Your seating can only be controlled by what you do in those five minutes. We have researched different ways of seating and nothing seems to be more fair than what we are doing right now. This is the same system used in many college and professional orchestra auditions.

Look at the seating as a temporary placement because you will have another audition in the second half of the year.

MUSIC TEACHERS

The BYSO attempts to keep an updated list of music teachers in the area. Musicians and their parents are asked to assist in keeping the list updated by completing the music teacher information on the audition application and informing the BYSO of other music teachers of which they may be aware.

DIRECTIONS TO REHEARSAL AND CONCERT SITES

REHEARSALS

All rehearsals except dress rehearsals will be held at Binghamton High School unless otherwise announced and specified in the weekly announcements.

If there is a change, you will be notified the week ahead and will be posted on the web site. If you are absent, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to call to check on the change of place.

Binghamton High School is located on corner of Oak and Main Street in Binghamton. ENTER the on Oak Street side of the building.

CONCERT SITES

West Middle School, Binghamton (Site of Winter and Spring Concerts)

Take Riverside Drive until you get to Lourdes Hospital, Look for Kneeland Ave. (Kneeland Ave is at the traffic light by the hospital) Turn onto Kneeland Ave and stay on this Ave until you come to W Middle Ave. (This intersection can be hard to find and does come up quickly). East Middle School is visible from the intersection.

Park in the side lots of the building and enter in the front.

Anderson Center for Performing Arts, Vestal (Special Event Site)

Take the Vestal Parkway, to the Binghamton University Campus and turn into the main entrance to the campus. Follow the signs and go around the drive to the right side. Signs for Anderson Center will guide you. Parking can be found along the drive and/or West Gym parking lots.

Broome County Veterans Memorial Arena, Binghamton (Annual BCC Graduation)

Locate the State Office Building in Binghamton and the Broome County Arena is located across the street from the S.O.B. (State Office Building) and next to the HSBC Plaza Building. Parking can be found in the State St. parking Ramp. Or for stage crew and/or musicians directly behind the Arena as space allows.

SNOW POLICY

If schools are closed because of snow and the roads are clear, rehearsal will continue. If the roads are NOT CLEAR, or a state of emergency has been issued, there will be no rehearsal. CALL the BYSO person responsible for your telephone chain to check or check the BYSO News Flash on the websites home page.

Thankyou for your Participation and Cooperation and Have a Great Season

Acknowledgements – BYSO Handbook is a Revised Version of the CYSO Handbook produced and written by the Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra, PO Box 863 Arnold, MD..

BYSO wishes to thank CYSO for permission to reproduce portions of their original document.